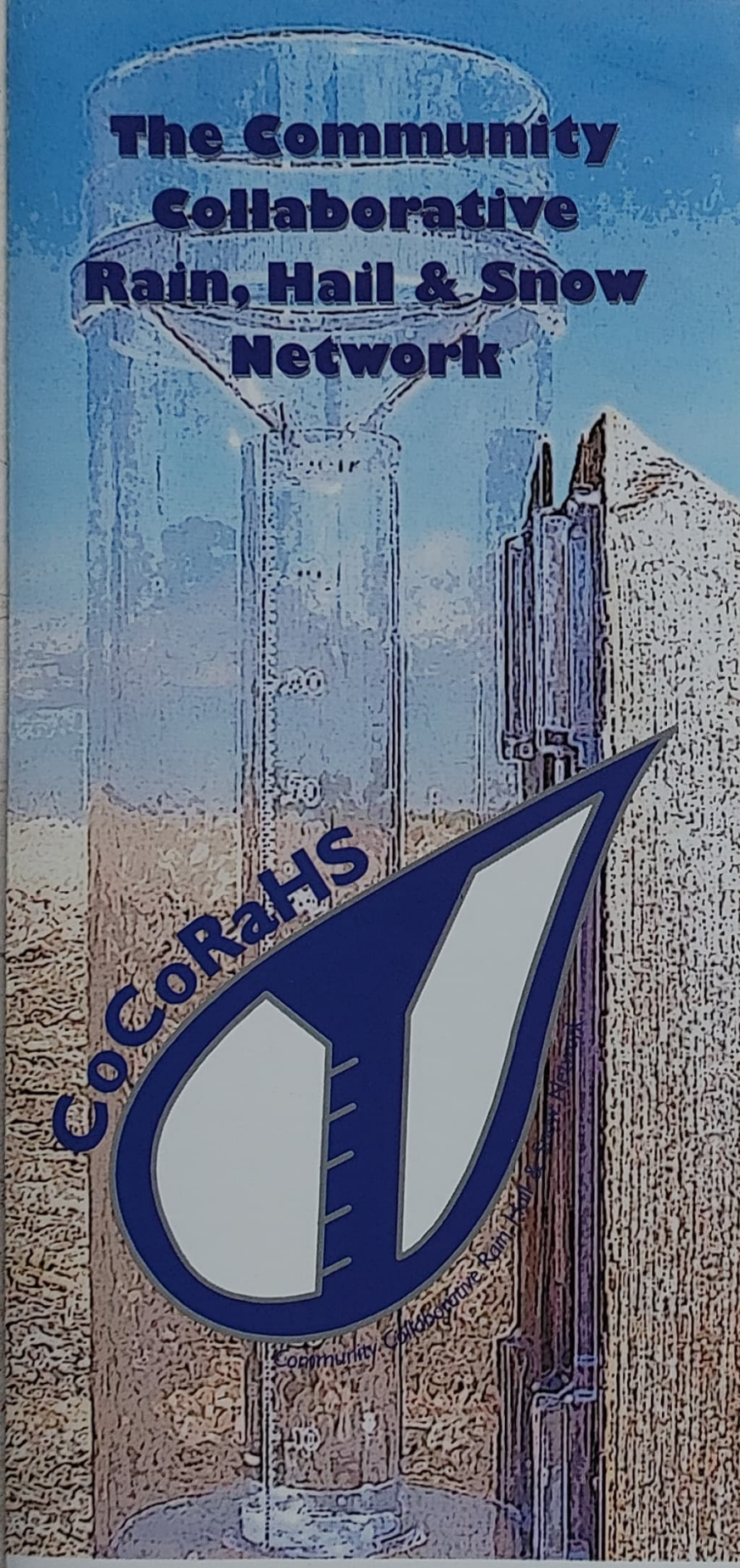
The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network



"Measuring precipitation in your backyard . . .
Helping your community . . . Impacting the nation"

www.cocorahs.org

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What is CoCoRaHS?

CoCoRaHS, the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, is a unique, non-profit, community-based, high density network of individual and family volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, who take daily measurements of rain, hail and snow in their backyards.

Why is there so much interest in rain, hail and snow?

Precipitation is essential for life. It varies greatly with topography, storm type and season. It really is true that it may pour on one side of the street and be dry on the other. A portion of a field may be pounded by hail while others nearby receive no damage. Snowfall may pile up in one neighborhood and only dust another. Rain, hail and snow are easy to measure, and the data collected are very important. Meteorologists are very interested in precipitation, but so are many others. Engineers, hydrologists, entomologists, insurance experts, building contractors and even baseball players and coaches . . . you name it, everyone seems to care about rain, hail and snow. And for some, like farmers, it is their very livelihood.

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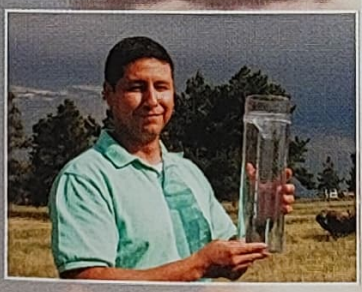
A BRIEF HISTORY

CoCoRaHS came about because of a devastating flash flood that hit Fort Collins, Colorado in July 1997. A very localized storm dumped over a foot of rain in several hours while other portions of the city had only modest rainfall. The ensuing flood killed five people and caused $200 million in damages. With this in mind, CoCoRaHS was born in 1998 with a few dozen volunteers. As more volunteers participated, rainfall maps could be produced for every storm showing fascinating local patterns that were valuable both for scientists and for local residents. As a result, CoCoRaHS continues to grow with thousands of volunteers now in numerous states.



VOLUNTEERS OF ALL AGES WELCOME!

The foundation of the network are volunteers willing to spend a few minutes each day measuring and reporting precipitation. This is a project we can all help with: adults, children, senior citizens and entire families.

counts!

Simple measuring tools

Volunteers use high quality rain gauges. In some states, "hail pads" are used to study hail storms.

Training "The key to our success"

It is important that all CoCoRaHS precipitation reports be as accurate and consistent as possible. Local training sessions are held to teach new observers how to install their instruments and properly measure the precipitation. Training materials are also available on the CoCoRaHS Web site.

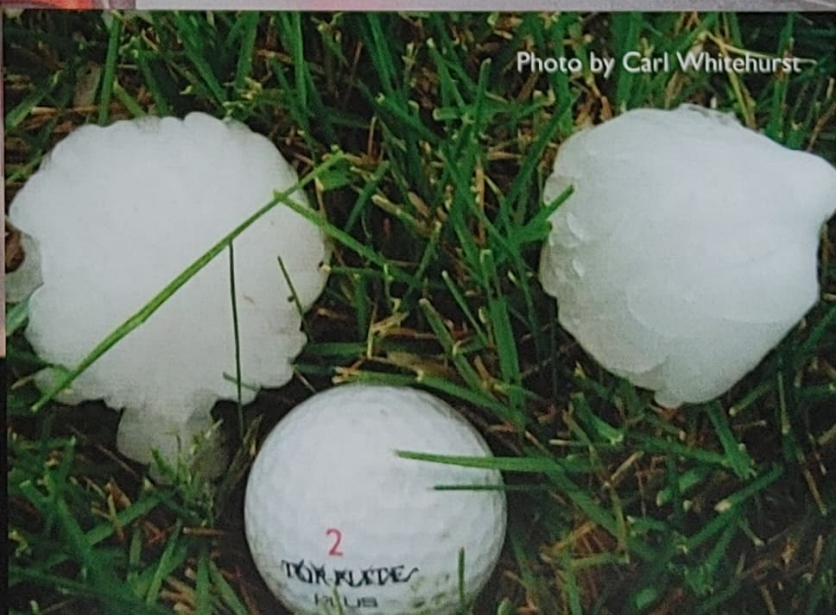


Photo by Carl Whitehurst
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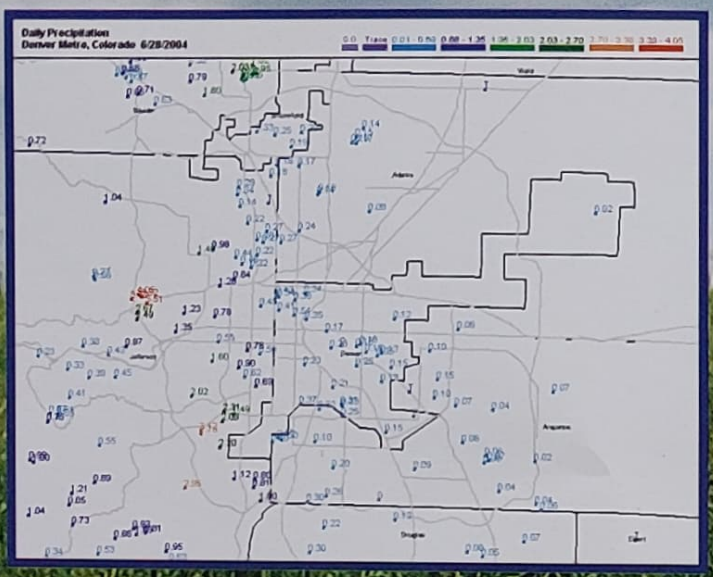

Data on the Web

Volunteers post their daily observations on the CoCoRaHS Web site. Observations are immediately available in map and table form for scientists and the public to view. By providing high quality, accurate measurements, the observers are able to supplement existing networks and provide many useful results to scientists, resource managers, decision makers and other users.

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CoCoRaHS is Educational

CoCoRaHS offers a variety of learning opportunities for volunteers. In addition to training, periodic email and newsletters inform participants about how CoCoRaHS data are used by researchers, natural resource managers, and others. CoCoRaHS is also involved in developing classroom resources for teachers and in conducting teacher workshops on weather and climate. By participating in a science project with a local feel, citizens develop a sense of community with fellow observers and raise awareness about their surrounding environment.

Why Join CoCoRaHS?

CoCoRaHS is a fun activity for our volunteers. If you have an interest in weather and would like to help your local community, as well as scientists and others interested in precipitation, then CoCoRaHS is for you. It only takes a few minutes a day and gives you the chance to participate in real "hands-on" science. You may be amazed at what you will learn as you become more aware of the weather that impacts you and your neighbors.

How can I Participate?

You may become a volunteer by signing up via our Web site: *www.cocorahs.org*.

On-line training materials are available. Please inquire about upcoming local training sessions in your area.

For more Information:

Please contact:

CoCoRaHS Headquarters
Colorado State University
1371 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1371

Or visit us on the Web: *www.cocorahs.org*

CoCoRaHS is supported by various sponsors across the country. To see a full list visit our home page and click on "sponsors". Additional collaborators are welcome to help continue to improve and expand the network.